ATARI DEALER NEWS

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ST: THE HOTTEST SELLING NEW PC

The hottest computer launched in 1985 (by far) was the 520ST system. Around the world, sales accelerated throughout the year. In Germany the ST was the all-around best selling computer. In the USA, the ST far outsold the Amiga despite all the hype, and was chosen "Best Hardware Value of 1985" by InfoWorld. The Atari ST is already far ahead of the pace of other top computers like the Commodore 64 and Apple Mac at a similar time after their launches. We fearlessly predict that the ST will be the overall winner of 1986!

ATARI LAUNCHES 1040ST -- FIRST MEGABYTE SYSTEM UNDER $1000

With an almost unbelievable price/performance ratio, the new Atari 1040ST breaks the one megabyte barrier. With a meg this computer packs more raw computing power than ever before, at an Atari low price.
 The 1040ST is also a step up in convenience. The double-sided disk drive is built in, as is the power supply for both. We have eliminated the 2 external power supplies and the drive cable for less desktop clutter. Of course, you can still add an external drive and all other peripherals. The internal drive is located where the joystick and mouse ports were on the 520, and those ports have been moved to the front of the keyboard to make it easier for left-handers to use the mouse.

 The 1040ST is an exclusive product for computer specialty stores, and begins shiping this month.

1986 PRICING & PROGRAMS FAVORABLE TO COMPUTER DEALERS

In a move designed to bolster the computer specialty dealers who have formed the hard core of Atari sales in the past year, Atari Corp. has designed its 1986 pricing programs to give the dealers the greatest possible advantage versus chain stores. After the various discounts, the net price to dealers is lower than the net to chains.
 According to Michael V. Katz, Executive Vice President of Marketing, "Our dealers will be able to go head to head with the chain stores on pricing. We want the chains to carry our product, but we want full service computer specialists to be able to make profits on the line as well. The new program enables computer dealers to be price competitive, to make their margins, and to provide the service we want for our customers."

LATEST PRINT AD CAMPAIGN TO DEBUT IN MARCH

Computer magazines will feature the latest ST ads in their April issues, available during March. The full-color double-page spread shows a Ferrari with an ST on the hood, with this headline: "THE ST COMPUTER LINE FROM ATARI. IT'S LIKE GETTING THE POWER AND SPEED OF A FERRARI FOR THE PRICE OF A FORD." The now-famous comparison chart has been updated for the 1040ST specs.

Anther quote from the body copy sums up the Atari ST position: "The only question in 1986 isn't which company to buy a computer from, but which computer to buy from Atari."

ATARI DAZZLES INDUSTRY AT COMDEX AND CES

Each time Atari attends a show our booths are jammed with people admiring our products. You'd think they would be used to us by now, but we are so far ahead of the competition that they still can't believe their eyes.

At Comdex in November, the Atari booth was filled with 50 software development companies showing their products for the ST. In all, almost 100 titles were shown above and beyond those already on sale. This put to rest the stories in the press of lacking software support for the ST. Included in the Atari exhibit were Activision, Spinnaker, VIP, Michtron, Hippopotamus, Haba, Antic, GST, Sierra-OnLine, Mirage Concepts, Academy, Regent, Xanth, XLent, Batteries Included, BMB, TDI, Migraph, Kuma, Quickview, Progressive, and many more.

The biggest crowd pleaser was the "Bouncing Ball" exhibit. Alongside an Amiga was a Macintosh with a rather jerky ball in monochrome, a 130XE with a full-color ball, and a 520ST with by far the best display of smooth, fast animation. We took a lot of heat for this dramatic display because Commodore was not around to defend themselves. Sorry, Commodore!

One certain result of the show was a big boost for ST system sales through Xmas. Thanks, dealers!

The CES booth featured all the Atari product lines. One wall featured the 2600 and 7800 video games, another had the 65XE and 130XE systems, and the third featured a giant wall of monitors showing the abundance of ST software.

One machine that was not on display was the 1040ST, since we are saving it for computer retailers. It was available at our suite for viewing by our reps who cover specialty dealers, but it was kept off the floor.

Once again, our major competitors stayed away from the show. We guess they were trying to figure out how on Earth to compete against us. Good luck!

ATARI ADDS TOP SALES EXECS

As sales get rolling in 1986, Atari has appointed two new sales executives. Bob Gordon is the new Vice President of Sales and Larry Samuels is the new Director of Sales for computer specialty dealers.

Bob Gordon joins Atari after serving as Casio's V.P. of the Consumer Electronics division, and had previously been National Sales Manager at Sharp Electronics and National Marketing Manager at Panasonic. His role is to manage the entire U.S. sales effort to

computer hardware and software specialists and to the mass market.

Larry Samuels had been President of Vicom Distributors in Salt Lake City before joining Atari. Prior to that he led the Apple university consortium program at the University of Utah and was V.P. of Sales for Great Salt Lake Computer Company, a retail chain. At Atari he is responsible for management of sales through computer specialty dealers.

130XE PACKAGE DEAL FOR 1986

Some dealers last year tested a complete 8-bit computer package, with great results. This year Atari is rolling the program out nationwide.

The package consists of the 130XE computer, a 1050 disk drive, a 1027 letter quality printer, and software including AtariWriter Plus word processor, Home Filing Manager, Music Composer, Star Raiders, and Defender. The suggested price for the package is $399.

Atari President Sam Tramiel said, "We tried different combinations with some dealers last year. This was the most successful by far. The complete hardware package plus the most requested types of software gives the first-time consumer confidence. They get what they need at an unbeatable price."

MORE ONLINE SUPPORT FOR DEALERS AND END-USERS

Atari's online support has been expanded to include every major national service. In addition to those, the Atari corporate bulletin board has been expanded from 2 to 4 lines by adding two ST systems with special sections for dealers.

Nationwide, Atari representatives respond to inquiries on CompuServe, BIX, GENIE, the Source, Delphi, and the Well. Each of these systems has dedicated areas for Atari computer support. Anyone reaching these systems can leave questions for Atari people to answer. The systems also include areas for text information and for public-domain software downloads.

On the Atari Base BBS in Atari corporate headquarters, we have added two ST systems to share the 1500 call-per-week load. The ST systems have special private areas for dealers and for service centers only. To reach Atari Base call 408-745-5308 anytime at 300 or 1200 baud. To reach the special ST lines call 408-745-2642. Dealers should leave a private message requesting access to the restricted sections. Many free programs are avaialable through these lines.

ATARI SERVICE DEPARTMENT HAS ST ROMS, DIAGNOSTICS, AND SPARE PARTS

The TOS ROM chips arrived in January. With these a service center can replace the original two ROMs inside the ST with six new chips and give the customer instant startup of the system. The ROMs also free up about 190K of system RAM which previously held TOS. In addition, several system problems were corrected with this release of TOS in ROM. ROM chips are available at a suggested list price of $25.

The Atari Service department also has a sophisticated diagnostic kit for the ST systems. The latest kit is revision 3.3, which sells to service centers for $114.75 plus freight. It includes an adapter board, all cables, a program board, and schematics, parts

list, and manual. The latest version of this kit allows you to use another ST as a diagnostic terminal, using the built-in VT52 emulator and an optional RS232 cable.

The Service Department is finalizing a revamped program for ST repair. Replacements at the board level will be available as well as individual chips. The next issue of this newsletter will include more details on this new program.

To reach the Atari Service Department call (408) 745-2466.

ST PUBLICITY

Byte Magazine recently wrote a "product description" of the 520ST. In case you missed it, we are extracting some choice bits here. Watch for the March issue of Byte with a cover story on the 1040ST!

Byte Magazine Product Description: 520ST, The 68000 Unbounded

"For many years the public has equated the Atari name with arcade games and joysticks. In truth, the Atari 400/800/XL computer line is technically at least comparable if not better than other 8-bit machines, so it should not be a surprise that the company's latest venture, the 520ST, is a competitive 68000 system. Indeed, we are most impressed with the clarity of the graphics,

with the speed of the disk I/O (inut/output), and with the 520ST's value.
"Several software-development languages are already available, including FORTH, Modula-2, and C. With them, you can tap the power of the 68000 at a most reasonable price.

"We were impressed by the high data-transfer rate of both the floppy-disk drives and the hard-disk drives we tested with the 520ST. The speed is a tribute to the efficiency of the DMA custom chip and the WD1772 floppy controller. I/O is quick (no endless waiting during disk reads), and, unlike the Macintosh, you can remove disks easily at the touch of a button on the drive.

"We used both the monochrome SM124 and RGB SC1224 monitors with excellent results. The color monitor supports low and medium resolution. You can use the monochrome monitor only for high resolution. All of the displays are clear, sharp, readable, and flicker-free, but we were particularly impressed by the clarity of the high-resolution monochrome.

"The 520ST is an architecturally simple 68000 computer with high-resolution color video output and a high-speed DMA port. In fact, the easiest way to summarize our first look at the hardware is that the 520ST presents the 68000 unbounded. Not only does it offer an excellent price/performance ratio, but we expect it to produce some impressive benchmarks on tasks with heavy computation.

"The 520ST's complete keyboard and impressive array of ports add up to a very attractive system. The 520ST's use of standards (MIDI, 68000, Yamaha sound chip, Centronics parallel port, RS-232C serial port, and Western Digital FDC) should make it easier to program, expand, and manufacture.

"Another fascinating factor in the 520ST world is the promised cheap, powerful peripherals.

"The Atari 520ST is certainly an excellent value. With the current
availability of several high level languages, the 520ST will undoubtedly provide
many users with what they seek: a means to tap the power of the 68n000 at a price
they can afford."

NO HOLDS BARRED COMPARISON: 1040ST VS. MAC PLUS

CPU SPEED: The 1040ST runs at 8.01 million cycles per second (or 8.01 megaHertz). Mac
Plus runs at 7.83 meg.

INTERNAL ROM: The 1040ST has 192K of ROM containing the entire operating system. The Mac
Plus has 128K of ROM, requiring floppy disk swaps to load the OS.

VIDEO DISPLAY: The 1040ST can display 640 pixels per line and 400 lines in high resolution
monochrome. The Mac Plus 512 by 342, roughly two thirds of the number of pixels. And of
course the 1040ST can display in full color -- the Mac Plus cannot. The video display on
the 1040ST is a full 12" diagonal for comfortable viewing, while the Mac Plus is a tiny 9"
screen.

KEYBOARD: The 1040ST has 94 keys including the standard QWERTY section, a numeric keypad,
10 function keys, and a cursor control pad. The Mac Plus has no function keys or separate
cursor keypad.

SOUND AND MUSIC: The 1040ST has an audio range from 30 to beyond 20,000 cycles per second.
The Mac Plus is limited to 7,000 cycles. The 1040ST also includes MIDI ports, which are
absent on the Mac Plus.

PERIPHERAL PORTS: The 1040ST includes industry standard parallel printer and serial modem
ports, while the Mac Plus has two non-standad serial ports. The 1040ST has a DMA port
which handles 8 devices, while the Mac Plus has a SCSI port for only seven devices. The ST
has two ports for joysticks (one which also serves for the mouse), while Mac Plus has one
mouse-only port. The 1040ST has ROM expansion port and MIDI in and out, which are missing
on the Mac Plus.

PRICE: The 1040ST system retails for $999 with monochrome monitor and double-sided
built-in floppy drive. The Mac Plus system is $2599.

10 RECOMMENDED ST SOFTWARE TITLES

Do you stock the very best software titles for the ST computers? Our reviewers, with help
from dealers and user groups, have selected the 10 most important ST software programs to
stock, in terms of sales, quality, and having a well-rounded software line to complement
the ST hardware. Here are our picks (in no particular order), followed by some guesses for
hot titles to come in the next couple of months:

PRODUCTIVITY:
- VIP Professional... despite problems with early versions, this remains one of the musts
for the ST. A complete Lotus 1-2-3 workalike.
- H&D Base... a brand new title, this offers a complete emulation of DBase II. Build your
own accounting systems with this well-documented package.
- DEGAS... by most reports the top-selling package of last Christmas. A top quality paint
program for all graphic modes.

- Regent Spell... an easy to use, complete spelling checker that is compatible with most word processing systems.
- ST Talk 1.2... a true bargain for telecommunications, with most features a power user needs. [Barely noses out MI-Term in this category.]

ENTERTAINMENT:
- Sundog... a combination of adventure and arcade action, a complex game that will take many hours to play. Fighting, trading, and exploring.
- King's Quest II... an animated graphic adventure as attractive as it is fun.
- Ultima II... a role playing game with monsters, dungeons, and magic.
- Treasure Island... a graphic adventure game for children and adults, based on the classic novel.

EDUCATION:
- Typing Tutor/Word Invaders... build up your typing skills painlessly.

HOT SOFTWARE COMING SOON:

- Music Studio... a terrific music program from Activision, supporting MIDI as well as the internal sound chip. Edit music on screen, change wave sounds, add lyrics, and much more. A sure winner!
- The Graphic Artist... a very complete package for design, typesetting, and even engineering. Includes some features never before seen in this type of program, like a spreadsheet!
- Atari Planetarium... the most complete astronomy package ever, sure to delight students and amateur astronomers. Shows the sky at any location on Earth for any time within 10,000 years!
- Flight Simulator... SubLogic's perrenial best-seller comes to the ST with multiple windows for different views, pull-down menus to change options, mouse control, and spectacular graphics.
- Time Bandit... a multiple-level arcade game with the best graphics we have seen yet.
- Easy Draw... a sophisticated "draw" package (as opposed to "paint") which lets you manipulate objects on the screen -- resizing, stretching, and putting different ones on top.

APPLICATIONS NOTE: DO-IT-YOURSELF NEWSLETTER

Desktop publishing is one of the hottest areas in home computing. An Atari computer system can let you publish your own newsletter. All you need is to bring the right ingredients together.
     First, the printer. You need something that can create letter-quality output. We use an Okidata Microline 193, which is a fast dot-matrix with correspondence quality. We set the printer up as 12 pitch (also called elite, 12 characters per inch across), which tends to look more professional than 10 pitch (pica). We leave the top 12 lines of the first page blank for a title, and justify the type for a more professional look. It also helps if your printer can create graphics -- we use a separate epson-compatible for graphic dumps.

     Next, the software. We use ST Writer on the ST because it is simple and fast. We print to the screen to make sure all the lines fall on the right pages. We also use ST Writer's print-to-disk capability to upload this material to our Atari BBS -- most people will not need this.

     For the title we use either NEOchrome Sampler or DEGAS. We create the large text,

then use the ST screen dump ability to an Epson graftrax-compatible printer. Once we have a good-looking title on paper we paste it in place on the first page.

It is, of course, possible to use different configurations for the same job. If you have an 8-bit Atari computer system you can choose either Typesetter from XLent software or The Print Shop from Broderbund if you want fancy layouts, or just use AtariWriter Plus, which has double-column print capability if you want to keep it simple. On the ST you can use Typesetter ST (also from XLent), or a straight word processor like 1st Word or ST Writer.

For more information, check out the Winter 1986 issue of Atari Explorer. There is an article there on Typesetter and The Print Shop that describes the differences and how they are used.

SOFTWARE CAPSULE REVIEWS

H&D Base from Mirage Concepts is a complete emulator of DBase II, the popular Ashton-Tate relational database title. It is fully compatible with DBase II templates and data files, which can be ported and used immediately in the ST. It runs substantially faster on the ST than on a PC compatible. H&D Base also adds extensions in the Forth language for even greater power. A very complete instruction manual is included as well.

With H&D Base you can file, retrieve, compare, contrast, and manipulate the fields within records of different files which relate to each other. H&D Base can be used for applications ranging up to full accounting systems, where different files update each other -- invoices can update inventory files.

H&D Base is from Mirage Concepts, 4055 W. Shaw #108, Fresno, CA 93711, or call (209) 227-8369.

Michtron BBS is a powerful bulletin board program for an ST system with an auto-answer modem. A user can build message bases, set up software and text downloading areas, validate passwords, and transfer files. Atari has even adopted this program for its own BBS (408-745-2642).

Michtron BBS is from Michtron, 576 S. Telegraph, Pontiac MI 48053, or phone (313) 334-5700.

Maps and Legends is one of the most interesting educational titles we have seen on the ST system. This program can display maps of the world in many different styles, and it also has a unique "zoom" feature to show details. Perfect for students of geography or for anyone who wants to become familiar with different types of maps.
Maps and Legends is available from Antic Software, 524 Second Street, San Francisco, CA 94107, or call (415) 957-0886.

Personal Pascal is the first ST language from long-time 8-bit supporters OSS. This native code Pascal compiler is a full implementation of the popular language for students and for serious software developers who want to develop true window and menu applications without needing Atari's development kit. It includes a powerful program editor and a paperback-book sized manual as well.

Personal Pascal comes from Optimized Systems Software, 1221-B Kentwood Ave., San Jose, CA 95129, (408) 446-3099.

NEW ST BOOKS

Abacus software has released a series of books dedicated to the serious ST programmer. The latest of these are Atari ST Internals, Atari ST GEM Programmers Reference, and Atari ST Machine Language. The machine language book describes in depth the instructions of the 68000 chip and the use of assembler and tools on the ST system.
    The other two books are very similar in content to the Atari developers documentation. Together, they discuss most of the systems software and the hardware of the ST. They form an invaluable reference to those who do not have the Atari package, and should be hot sellers during the next few months.

    Abacus Software is at P.O. Box 7211, Grand Rapids, MI 49510, or phone (616) 241-5510

Compute! Books has released two ST books in the last month. The first is called Compute!s ST Programmer's Guide and is actually a potpourri of material useful to beginning and intermediate ST programmers, including sections on BASIC, Logo, and C. The Elementary Atari ST by William B. Sanders is an introduction to the ST system including a primer on Logo and a chapter on the Forth language.
Compute! Books is located at P.O. Box 5038, F.D.R. Station, New York, NY 10150, or phone (800) 346-6767 (in New York call (212) 887-8525).

NEXT ISSUE

We will be looking for dealers to profile in the next issue, as well as tips on how best to present, advertise, and sell Atari computers. If you would like your store to be featured, or if you know the best way to move the product, please share with us! Call Neil Harris at (408) 745-2160.   Thanks.

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